



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

10.3.2015

B8-0256/2015

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on recent attacks and abductions by Daesh in the Middle East, notably of Assyrians
(2015/2599(RSP))

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on behalf of the EFDD Group

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European Parliament resolution on recent attacks and abductions by Daesh in the Middle East, notably of Assyrians (2015/2599(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- Having regard to the Statement by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission at the UN Human Rights Council of 3 March 2015,
- Having regard to Council Conclusions on Counter-terrorism, 9 February 2015,
- Having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief adopted on 24 June 2013,
- Having regard to the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Elements for an EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat of 6 February 2015,
- Having regard to the Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya, 16 February 2015,
- Having regard to European Parliament resolution of 12 February 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and Syria, in particular in the IS context and to European Parliament resolution of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Iraq and Syria, and the IS offensive, including the persecution of minorities,
- Having regard to United Nations Security Council resolution Resolution 2199 (2015) and 2170(2014),
- Having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),
- Having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief of 1981,
- Having regard to the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief,
- Having regard to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954 and its protocols,
- Having regard to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities of 18 December 1992,

- Having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. Whereas the Middle East remains one of the most violent region of the world for minorities and especially Christians; whereas more than 70 percent of Christians have fled Iraq since 2003, and more than 700,000 Christians have left Syria since the civil war began in 2011;
- B. Whereas at the end of February Islamic State militants have abducted at least 287 people from Assyrian Christian villages in north-eastern Syria, between them elderly, women and at least 30 children, during a three day offensive;
- C. Whereas Da'esh now controls ten Christian villages and whereas kidnapped people have been taken away from these villages and into Da'esh territory and whereas hundreds of Christians have now fled to the two main cities in Hasaka province;
- D. Whereas Da'esh routinely kills members of religious minorities and Sunni Muslims who do not swear allegiance to its self-declared "caliphate", impose a 'jizya' tax on non-Muslims to be paid in gold and asks to refrain from any public expression of religion in exchange for a guarantee of their safety warning resistance will make them 'legitimate' targets;
- E. Whereas Da'esh released 19 Assyrian Christians, abducted during an offensive against Kurdish fighters in the north-eastern governate of Hasakah in Syria, whereas the hostages were freed on Sunday after two days of negotiations, whereas more than 200 Assyrian are still in Da'esh hands;
- F. Whereas At least 21 Egyptians Copts were kidnapped in two separate incidents in the city of Sirte, Libya in December and January and later brutally beheaded by Da'Esh Jihadists; whereas Egyptian warplanes struck Da'esh targets in retaliation near the Islamist-held city of Derna;
- G. Whereas Da'esh has been targeting religious and ethnic minorities, driving out Christians and forcing Syriacs, Chaldeans, Yazidis and other minority groups from their homes and lands, gunning down men and boys in execution-style killings, and abducting hundreds of Yezidi women and girls into slavery, forcing many to become “wives” of Da'esh fighters, who included thousands of foreign volunteers from Europe, North America, Australia, North Africa, the Gulf and elsewhere;
- H. Whereas Da'esh continues banning all medical and food supplies from entering areas under regime’s control in Der-Ezzor city, inhabited by 350,000 civilians, and under siege by Da'esh since the beginning of the year;
- I. Whereas Da'esh militants have consistently destroyed churches, monuments, shrines and cultural sites belonging to minorities in the region and recently smashed statues and examples of Assyrian art with sledgehammers inside the Mosul Museum, a heritage of the great history of Iraq and of Mesopotamia, claiming that the pieces of

art had been excavated by Satanists; whereas on the 6 March 2015 Da'esh bulldozed the site of the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud in northern Iraq, a cultural treasure more than 2500 years old; whereas there are reports that Da'esh began looting and damaging a third cultural site, Khorsabad; whereas the selling of looted Syrian and Iraqi art is one of the main means of Da'esh financing;

- J. Whereas Da'esh had been all-inclusive in its violence against the diversity of Iraq and Syria, considering Shiite Muslims apostates, destroying Shiite shrines and massacring more than 1,000 Shiite Iraqi soldiers, persecuting Christians, Assyrians and Yazidis living in its territories and slaughtering fellow Sunni Muslims rejecting their rule;
1. Strongly condemns the kidnapping and persecution of Assyrian Christians and of other minorities and the singling out of Christian communities that may end the Christian presence in the region; confirms and supports the inalienable right of all religious and ethnic minorities living in Iraq and Syria to continue to live in their historical and traditional homelands in dignity, equality and safety and to practise their religion freely;
 2. Recalls that widespread or systematic attacks directed against civilian population because of their ethnic or political background, religion or belief may constitute a crime against humanity; stresses the need to end impunity and reaffirms the need to hold accountable those guilty of attacks, kidnapping, violence, abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law; reminds the importance of bringing to justice the perpetrators of attacks against civilians and provide effective remedies to the victims of attacks that will enable them to remain in their societies and to practise their faith freely; reiterates its call for the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court and supports all initiatives in this direction;
 3. Calls on the international community to mobilize and to do everything in its power to negotiate the release and avoid the execution of all those still in the hands of Da'esh; believes that the multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies of Iraq and Syria should be preserved at all costs; asks the governments of the region and the international community to put in practice common solutions for protection and increased security of minorities; expresses its support for the creation of an internationally guaranteed and enforced safe haven for Iraqi minorities;
 4. Stresses that there has been a total failure of civilian protection in the Syrian Arab Republic and that the Syrian government has not only failed to protect civilians from terrorist attacks but has directly participated in attacks against them; reminds that the first duty of a government is to protect its citizens; asks the government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cease any attack against civilians, to allow the delivery of

humanitarian assistance, to do everything in its power to protect its citizens, especially those belonging to minorities who are more exposed to violence, and to honour its binding legal obligation to protect its citizens from crimes against humanity and other grave violations;

5. Calls on the governments of Syria and Iraq to offer effective protection and assistance to civilians, especially coming from minorities, such as by providing safe spaces and access to basic need services, to publicly affirm the crucial importance of religious diversity and well-being of all religious communities in the Middle Eastern countries and to pursue policies that promote and protect the preservation of these communities;
6. Requests the EU to adapt its development assistance to target all possible minority groups that are being displaced by the threat of Daesh; encourages the EU to provide financial assistance through local and regional churches, like the Patriarchates of the Middle East, in order to ensure that all minority groups can benefit from the protection and support of European aid;
7. Condemns the destruction of Christian, Jewish and other religious and cultural sites and the destruction of priceless artefacts in the Mosul Museum; senounce Da'esh strategy of cultural cleansing and asks the international community to consider the protection of Iraq's cultural heritage as an integral element for the country's security;
8. Strongly condemns the horrific execution-style killing of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya by the group calling itself the Tripoli Province of Islamic State and believes that this amount to a war crime and an attack on the fundamental principles of humanity; stands in solidarity with the people and the government of Egypt and conveys its condolences to the families and friends of those massacred by terrorists; expresses profound sadness over the slayings of victims that were murdered because of their faith;
9. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that the victims' families receive the psychological and social support they require, both in the immediate aftermath of the atrocity and on a continuing basis as needed;
10. Appeals to all Islamic communities to unequivocally and unconditionally condemn the acts of Da'esh as an instrumentalisation of Islam by an extreme group to justify violence, intolerance and heinous crimes;
11. Welcomes the decisions taken in United Nation Security Council resolution 2199(2015) on oil trade, cultural heritage, kidnapping for ransom and external

donations and banking and asset freeze as a decisive step to stifle Da'esh financing and asks the UNSC to not hesitate to impose further targeted sanctions in the case these measures don't prove to be sufficient; calls on the Council to consider a more effective use of the existing restrictive measures, and in particular to deny Daesh the benefits of illicit oil sales, art sales or sales of other resources on international markets;

12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the Governments and Parliaments of the EU Member States, the Government and Council of Representatives of Iraq, the Regional Government of Kurdistan, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Libyan Government and the House of Representatives, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Rights Council and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.